

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1768
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USMISSION NATO
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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: MPOL, MARR, NATO, GR, TU
SUBJ: EXERCISE DISPLAY DETERMINATION MAY BECOME DOMESTIC POLITICAL
ISSUE

1. THE POSSIBILITY THAT GREECE MAY PARTICIPATE IN NATO EXERCISE
DISPLAY DETERMINATION IN THE AEGEAN IN SEPTEMBER HAS SPARKED A
PUBLIC DISPUTE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN AND PANHELLENIC
SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (PASOK) LEADER ANDREAS PAPANDREOU. THE ATHENS
PRESS HAS PICKED UP THE ISSUE AND IT MAY DEVELOP INTO A POLITICAL
CONTROVERSY.

2. PAPANDREOU OPENED THE DISPUTE LAST WEEKEND DURING A POLITICAL
RALLY IN IRAKLION. HE REPORTEDLY ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF LYING
WHEN IT MAINTAINS GREECE HAS WITHDRAWN FROM NATO. HE CLAIMED THAT
INSTEAD GREECE WAS PREPARING TO PARTICIPATE IN NATO NAVAL
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EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN UNDER THE COMMAND OF A BRITISH ADMIRAL.

3. ON JULY 26 THE ATHENS PRESS CARRIED A LENGTHY REBUTTAL FROM
"A GOVERNMENT SOURCE." ACCORDING TO THE SEMI-OFFICIAL ATHENS NEWS
AGENCY (ANA) BULLETIN, THE SOURCE CONFIRMED THAT GREECE HAD WITH-
DRAWN FROM NATO'S MILITARY WING TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY, NOT
PARTICIPATING AT ALL IN CERTAIN ACTIVITIES AND WITH REDUCED

REPRESENTATION IN OTHERS. WITH REGARD TO PRESS REPORTS THAT GREECE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN DISPLAY DETERMINATION, THE SOURCE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT WAS ENTRUSTED WITH THE POPULAR MANDATE AND WOULD, THEREFORE, DECIDE WHAT WAS BEST FOR THE NATION. THE SOURCE COMMENTED THAT PAPANDREOU WAS FREE TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST TO MAINTAIN "A BOMBASTIC AND CONTRADICTIONARY ISOLATION AND BE SUBJECTED TO VARIOUS IRRITATIONS, AS FOR INSTANCE THE HOLDING OF MULTI-NATIONAL EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN UNDER A TURKISH ADMIRAL." IF GREECE DID NOT PARTICIPATE, THE ANA BULLETIN COMMENTS, THE EXERCISE WOULD BE COMMANDED BY A TURKISH ADMIRAL WHILE THE NAVAL FORCES OPERATED IN THE AEGEAN. THUS, ACCORDING TO ANA, MILITARY CIRCLES POINT OUT THAT IF A BRITISH ADMIRAL ASSUMES COMMAND, THIS WOULD BE A GREEK SUCCESS.

4. THE ATHENS PRESS JULY 26 GIVES HEAVY COVERAGE TO THE NATO EXERCISE, IN GENERAL ACCEPTING GREEK PARTICIPATION AS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION. THERE HAVE BEEN NO FORMAL EDITORIAL COMMENTS AS YET, BUT THE COMMUNIST PRESS HAS PRESENTED THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE AS A "BETRAYAL" AND CONFIRMATION THAT PREPARATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR GREECE'S FULL REINTEGRATION INTO NATO.

MILLS

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